Hanan Faisal Ghazi
Asst. Prof. Abid Hmood Ali (Ph. D.)
Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Tikrit

*Corresponding author: E-mail: hananfaisalgh2022@gmail.com

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Iraqi EFL Learners’ Recognition of Impoliteness Strategies

The current study attempts to investigate Iraqi EFL learners’ recognition of impoliteness strategies according to their gender, age, and place of residence. As associated with this aim, the study hypothesizes that there is no statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners according to their gender, age, and place of residence. A sample of 140 Iraqi EFL college students at the fourth year stage, Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Tikrit, participated in responding to the test. The data collected from the test is analyzed according to Culpeper (1996). The results of this study indicate that gender, age, and place of residence affect Iraqi EFL learners’ recognition of impoliteness strategies.

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الخلاصة:
حائان فيصل غازي/ جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية
أ.م.د. عبد حمود علي/ جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

تحاول هذه الدراسة التحقق من ادراك الطلبة العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية لاستراتيجيات عدم اللياقة وفقًا للمتغيرات الجنس والعمر ومكان الإقامة. تفترض الدراسة أنه لا يوجد فرق ذو دلاله إحصائية بين القيم المحسوبة والقيم المجدولة لاختبار ادراك الطلبة لاستراتيجيات عدم اللياقة المستخدمة من قبل الطلبة العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية حسب الجنس والعمر ومكان الإقامة. تم استخدام اختبار فرضيات الدراسة التي هي مصدر البيانات. شارك في الاختبار عينة مكونة من

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1. Introduction

Impoliteness has been flourishing in the study of linguistics since it portrays different sides in analyzing people's attitudes through the use of language. It is not widely studied as politeness, that is defined as the use of good manners or etiquettes (Naji, 2020:2) but it has gained some attention in some fields of discourse, such as political discourse, military discourse, courtroom discourse, police discourse, as well as TV shows, CMC (computer-mediated communication) and literary texts (Laitinen, 2011: 27-28). In accordance with Culpeper (2008:36), impoliteness involves communicative behavior intending to cause the face loss of a target or perceived by the target to be so. And face loss in the context of impoliteness involves a conflict and clash of interests as the producer wishes (or is perceived to wish) to devalue the positive social value. Thus, impoliteness is a communicative action that is undertaken intentionally to cause someone to lose face completely or at least to feel face-loss (Rahardi, 2017: 310). This study focuses on the recognition and production of impoliteness strategies as used by Iraqi learners learning English as a foreign language. It attempts to achieve the following aims:

1. Examining Iraqi EFL learners' recognition of impoliteness strategies according to their gender.
3. Detecting Iraqi EFL learners' recognition of impoliteness strategies according to their age.
5. Discovering Iraqi EFL learners' recognition of impoliteness strategies according to their place of residence.

As a result, there is a need to answer the following questions:
1. Is there any statistically significant difference among the impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners at the recognition level according to their gender?

2. Is there any statistically significant difference among the impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners at the recognition level according to their age?

3. Is there any statistically significant difference among the impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners at the recognition level according to their place of residence?

   At the Alpha level of significance (0.05), it is hypothesized that:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners according to their gender.

2. There is no statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners according to their age.

3. There is no statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners according to their place of residence.

2. Definitions of Impoliteness

   Culpeper (2011:1) defines impoliteness as "using language to cause offence" and often involves "seeking to damage and/or damage a person's identity or identities". This behaviour has the particular negative effect of being *very offensive*. It refers to face attacks as communicative acts perceived by members of a social community (and often intended by speakers) to be purposefully offensive (Tracy and Tracy, 1998:227). Locher and Bousfield (2008:3) also add that impoliteness is the behavior that is face-aggravating in a particular context.

   According to Sell (2005: 114), impoliteness in language use is associated with social interactions and communication. It emerges when we create bad social interaction and reputations with others. Therefore, Culpeper et al. (2003:1546) assign impoliteness as "communicative strategies designed to attack the face, and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony". It is
considered as a linguistic aspect that has been seen as an opposite orientation to politeness (Al-Juburi and Abdulrahman, 2018:1).

3. Types of Impoliteness

Pragmaticians, according to Al-Khazaali & Al-Hindawi (2016: 36), discuss different types of impoliteness according to three principles: socialization, genuineness, and conceptualization. Each one of these classifications will be highlighted in the following lines.

3.1 Impoliteness according to Socialization

Socialization plays a significant role in the study of impoliteness. Thus, aspects like social indexing, conformity, and distinction all play a role in the ascription of impolite behaviors. According to Eelen (2001:190), social structure functions as a bridge between culture and the individual. As a result, impoliteness types according to social structure are as follows:

3.1.1 Individual Impoliteness

According to Mugford (2007: 378), individual or personal impoliteness is characterized by a lack of response. Situational examples of impoliteness are illustrated in the following turns where hearers do not respond:

(1) Teacher: Shut up. (teacher trying to control students)
(2) Colleague: Stop bothering me I have to get back to work. (small talk)
(3) Classmate: It's not your business. (small talk)

These utterances demonstrate directive speech acts, i.e., commanding and instructing. The use of the imperative in (1) and (2) and the declarative in (3) indicates that the speaker has a high expectation that the addressee will not respond but rather adhere to the directive. Such remarks may also show that the listener thinks he/she is powerless in transactional situations, such as dealing with teachers and co-workers (ibid).

3.1.2 Social Impoliteness

This type of impoliteness points to a situation in which the hearer perceives it as an attack on her/his social role (Mugford, 2007: 377). The following examples from L2 users and natives illustrate this type:

(4) Shop assistant (to hearer (L2 user) buying a Gameboy): In that case you just say machine not game.
(5) A. Bus driver: You have to pay attention.
   B. Passenger (L2 user): Oh I didn't think it was my bus.
In examples (4) and (5), the L2 user is treated as an incompetent member of society who cannot identify or find the goods they are looking for or find the right bus; i.e., his/her social role is attacked by a native user of the language. Simultaneously, L2 users' attempts to make a successful acquisition of and contend with the L2 may be “overstretched in also trying to respond to impoliteness from a shop assistant” (ibid: 379).

3.1.3 Cultural Impoliteness

According to Mugford (2007: 377), cultural impoliteness is that kind of impoliteness which the hearer perceives as an attack on his/her ethnic group. In addition, the significance of such an impolite action lies in the extreme aggressiveness demonstrated towards the listener. For example cultural impoliteness attacks the L2 user by accusing him/her of being backward and inferior, and often by making racist remarks like in the following examples:

(6) L1 user: Do you have electricity in Mexico? (underdevelopment)
L2 user: We are behind but not that much.
(7) Only trash comes from Mexico. (inferiority)
(8) I don't want my son eating tortillas and beans. (racism)
(9) Stupid black Mexico. (blatant racism)

3.2 Impoliteness according to Genuineness

Culpeper (1996: 351) divides impoliteness into two major types: mock or banter impoliteness and inherent impoliteness. The former remains on the surface since it is not intended to cause offence. For example,

(10) You silly bugger.

This utterance can be said by a host whose guest has arrived late at a party because of a misunderstanding. People can, for instance, call their friends idiots, silly or stupid in certain situations and still not truly mean it. Therefore, mock impoliteness is very common among intimates, and it is intended to maintain face and enhance social bonds (Culpeper, 1996:352).

Banter is seen as the key concept of mock impoliteness. For Mugford (2007: 377), banter is impoliteness, which reflects the playful use of impolite language. This type of impoliteness shows that indirectness can be used impolitely in some contexts of communication. It occurs primarily among close participants and is dependent on the force of the ironic utterance. That is, what
the speaker says is impolite to the hearer and clearly untrue (Leech, 1983:143-144).

On the other hand, Culpeper (1996:351) says that inherent impoliteness occurs when a person performs an anti-social activity. For example,

(11) Do you think you could possibly not pick your nose?

This question, which draws attention to another person's activity, does not show concern towards the hearer's positive face but inevitably damages it. Here, Culpeper reminds us of Leech's (1983) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) arguments that some statements are inherently impolite (e.g., orders) and automatically threaten the hearer's face (ibid:352).

3.3 Impoliteness according to Conceptualization

The types of impoliteness can be determined according to the way of conceptualizing the evaluations and understandings of good or bad verbal behavior in daily and institutional communication. Therefore, two basic types can be identified in this regard: first-order impoliteness and second-order impoliteness (Al-Khazaali and Al-Hindawi, 2016:39). Locher and Bousfield (2008:5) mention that the distinction between first-order and second-order approaches in politeness research stems from work that goes back to Watts, Ehlich, and Ide (1992) and Eelen (2001). First-order concepts are judgements about behavior, such as impolite, rude, polite, or polished, made by social actors themselves. These judgements are arrived at according to the norms of particular discursive practice. Furthermore, these conversational pragmatic judgements are motivated by the norms and expectations that individuals have constructed and developed through recategorizing the experiences of similar past situations that constitute the background knowledge of the native speaker or conclusions (pragmatic inferences) that one draws from other people's behaviors, opinions and experiences. That is to say, first-order impoliteness deals with a lay-person's understanding of the concepts. Second-order approaches use the concepts and consider them on a theoretical level. In other words, second-order impoliteness is based on the theoretical constructions within the pragmatic theories of social behavior and language usage (ibid).
4. Research Methodology

4.1 Respondents

The study involves (140) EFL undergraduate fourth-year students chosen randomly from the Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Tikrit during the academic year (2020-2021). The EFL learners comprised males (n = 70) and females (n = 70), and their ages ranged from 21-38 years old.

4.2 The Test

In order to test the respondents' recognition of impoliteness strategies, a test of fifteen situations have been designed. It is used to reveal the respondents' ability to recognize the types of impoliteness strategies. The respondents are required to read these strategies and choose only one option from a variety of options.

4.3 Administration of the Test

Respondents are encouraged to respond seriously to all the items of the test by explaining the importance of the purposes of the work they were involved in. What they are required to do in response to the test was demonstrated to them. Additionally, they are encouraged not to hesitate about asking for any clarification or explanation they might need during their performance. They are also assured that the aim of the test was for research purposes only and has nothing to do with their marks, so that they felt more relaxed. In order to save time and effort, they are asked to write their responses on the papers of the questionnaire.

5. Data Analysis and Discussions

The data is analyzed in light of the study's results, hypotheses, and aims as follows:

5.1 The First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis statement is:

"There is no statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies for Iraqi EFL learners according to their gender".

The purpose of this hypothesis is to examine Iraqi EFL learners' recognition of impoliteness strategies according to their gender i.e. Whether
gender affects Iraqi EFL learners' use of impoliteness strategies. As indicated in Figures (1) and (2), the results show that there is a difference between males and females in using impoliteness strategies at the recognition level.

Figure (1): Frequency and Percentages of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Male-Learners in the Recognition Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>30.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm Politeness</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>23.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure (2): Frequency and Percentages of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Female-Learners in the Recognition Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>26.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm Politeness</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>29.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious from Table (1) below that there is a difference between the mean scores of males (38.87) and females (36.45). Therefore, to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means of males and females, an independent sample T-test, which is a statistical technique that is used to analyze the mean comparison of two independent groups, is conducted. The analysis of T-test indicates that the calculated value (2.07) is higher than the tabulated one (1.994) at the Alpha level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (138). This implies that there is a statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL males and females learners. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected.
### Table 1: Mean Scores of the Recognition Test for Males and Females of Iraqi EFL Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD.</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>36.45</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>Calculated</td>
<td></td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>38.87</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alpha level of significance = 0.05

### 5.2 The Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis statement is: "There is no statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of recognition test of impoliteness strategies for Iraqi EFL learners according to their age".

The aim of this hypothesis is to examine Iraqi EFL learners' recognition of impoliteness strategies according to their age. In order to verify this hypothesis, the results will be displayed in Figures (3), (4) and (5) below.

**Figure (3): Frequency and Percentages of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Learners whose age ranges between (21-26) in the Recognition Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>28.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>29.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>18.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm Politeness</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>23.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>25.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm Politeness</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>34.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure (4): Frequency and Percentages of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Learners whose age ranges between (27-32) in the Recognition Test

![Frequency and Percentage of Impoliteness Strategies](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure (5): Frequency and Percentages of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Learners whose age ranges between (33-38) in the Recognition Test

As illustrated in the above figures, the findings of this hypothesis show that there is a difference between younger and older learners in using impoliteness strategies at the recognition level. The mean and the standard deviation of respondents' age are represented in Table (2) below. The mean of test-takers whose age is between (21-26) (39.63) is higher than the mean of participants whose age is between (27-32) (32.82) and those whose age is between (33-38) (31.10).

Table (2): Mean and Standard Deviation of Iraqi EFL Learners' Use of Impoliteness Strategies according to their Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-26</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1.530</td>
<td>39.63</td>
<td>6.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>32.82</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>31.10</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A one-way ANOVA test is run to find out if there is a statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies for Iraqi EFL learners according to their age. According to Burns (cited in Muhi, 2015: 58), the analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique used to study the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It is used
here to examine the significant differences in the respondents' performances across contextual variables (age and place of residence). Table (3) shows the results of one-way ANOVA test.

Table (3): The Calculated Value and the Tabulated Value of Recognition Test of Impoliteness Strategies Used by Iraqi EFL Learners according to their Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>T-calculated</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>T-tabulated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1435.461</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>717.730</td>
<td>18.428</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>5335.760</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>38.947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6771.221</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alpha level of significance = 0.05

As seen in Table (3) above, the calculated value (18.428) is greater than the tabulated one (3.062) at the Alpha level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (139). This finding means that there is a statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners according to their age.

5.3 The Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis statement is:

"There is no statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies for Iraqi EFL learners according to their place of residence".

The purpose of this hypothesis is to explore Iraqi EFL learners' recognition of impoliteness strategies according to their place of residence. The results in Figures (6), (7), and (8) show that the use of impoliteness strategies at the recognition level differs depending on where respondents live.
Figure (6): Frequency and Percentages of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Learners who live in city in the Recognition Test

![Graph showing frequency and percentages of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners who live in city in the Recognition Test.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>31.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>28.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm Politeness</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>22.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure (7): Frequency and Percentage of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Learners who live in Town in the Recognition Test

![Graph showing frequency and percentages of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners who live in town in the Recognition Test.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>18.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>30.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>21.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm Politeness</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>29.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure (8): Frequency and Percentages of Impoliteness Strategies used by Iraqi EFL Learners who live in Village in the Recognition Test

![Graph showing frequency and percentages of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners who live in village in the Recognition Test.]

As illustrated in Table (4) below, there is a difference between the mean scores and the standard deviation of the learners according to their place of residence. The mean of test-takers who live in the city is (36.13), whereas the mean of learners who live in town is (40.29), and the mean of respondents who live in the village is (35.66).

Table (4): Mean and Standard Deviation of Iraqi EFL learners' Use of Impoliteness Strategies According to Place of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of residence</th>
<th>No, of students</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>36.13</td>
<td>6.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>40.29</td>
<td>7.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>35.66</td>
<td>5.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A one-way ANOVA test is conducted to investigate whether there is a statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies for Iraqi EFL learners according to their place of residence (i.e., if place of residence affects Iraqi EFL learners' use of impoliteness strategies). Table (5) below shows the results of the one-way ANOVA test.

Table (5): The Calculated Value and the Tabulated Value of Recognition Test of Impoliteness Strategies Used by Iraqi EFL Learners according to their Place of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>T-calculated</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>T-tabulated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>645.926</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>322.963</td>
<td>7.223</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>3.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6125.295</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>44.710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6771.221</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alpha level of significance = 0.05

Table (5) illustrates that the calculated value (7.223) is higher than the tabulated one (3.062) at the Alpha level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (139). This means that there is a statistically significant difference between the calculated value and the tabulated value of the recognition test of impoliteness strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners according to their place of residence.

5. Discussion of the Results

The analysis of the data shows that Iraqi EFL learners have an extremely limited ability to use impoliteness strategies at the recognition level. According to the items of the test, Figure (9) below shows the overall Iraqi EFL Learners' performance of impoliteness strategies at the recognition Level.

![Figure (9): The Overall Iraqi EFL Learners' Performance of Impoliteness Strategies at the Recognition Level.](image)
The extent of the learners' ability to recognize impoliteness strategies can be described in terms of the mean score as shown in Table (6) below.

**Table (6): The Learners' Ability at the Recognition Level in Terms of the Mean Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Of Respondents</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Scale of Learners' Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>37.66%</td>
<td>Extremely limited user</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are essential factors in this study that determine Iraqi EFL learners' use of impoliteness strategies. The performance of Iraqi EFL learners for impolite strategies can be influenced by contextual variables, including gender, age, and place of residence. The first factor that influences the respondents' use of impoliteness strategies is gender. It has been observed that previous studies which investigate the relationship between impoliteness and gender indicate that males usually tend to use impoliteness more than females (e.g., Aydinoglu 2013, Tannen 1990, Lakoff 1973, Rassam and Ameen 2020, Ibrahim 2020). Figure (10) shows that the analysis of impoliteness strategies used by males and females at the recognition and level demonstrates that males tend to use impoliteness more than females. So the results of these studies are in line with the findings of the current study.

**Figure (10): The Overall Respondents' Performance of Impoliteness Strategies According to their Gender at Both the Recognition Level**

The second aspect that affects Iraqi EFL learners' use of impoliteness strategies in this study is their age. Figure (11) below shows the overall performance of the learners according to their age. As seen in the following figure, younger learners use impoliteness strategies more than older learners do. Therefore, this result is similar to the findings of Ibrahim (2020), who discovers that younger users use impolite expressions more than older users do (ibid: 76).
The final factor that influences Iraqi EFL learners' use of impoliteness strategies in this study is their place of residence. As shown in Figure (12) below, respondents who live in urban areas use politeness less than those who live in rural areas. As a result, the findings of this study contradict the findings of Chen (2019), who finds that urban residents are more inclined to express politeness in general and more subtle in their manner of showing politeness than rural residents.

Figure (12): The Overall Respondents' Performance of Impoliteness Strategies According to their Place of Residence at Both the Recognition Levels

6. Conclusions

Examining Iraqi EFL learners' ability to use impoliteness strategies at the recognition level has yielded as follows:
1. The results indicate that there is a variation between males and females of Iraqi EFL learners in using impoliteness strategies at the recognition level.
2. According to Iraqi EFL learners' age, younger learners have better recognition of impoliteness strategies than older learners.
3. According to Iraqi EFL learners' places of residence, learners who live in urban areas have a better recognition of impoliteness than those who live in rural areas.
References


**APPENDIX**

**RECOGNITION LEVEL**

Read the following situations carefully and then choose what you believe to be true in the following situations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Your younger brother returns your car late. What will you say to him? | a. Oh, idiot! Come on. You are late.  
  b. You are must come on time! What time is it?  
  c. Give me the key and go away of my face.  
  d. I thought I told you to be on time. |
| 2. A close friend breaks your laptop. What will you say to him? | a. You are such a moron.  
  b. Damn! You should carefully use it.  
  c. What do you do with my laptop? You have to fix it right now.  
  d. It is obvious that you have used it carefully. |
| 3. Your boss asks you to work | a. Do your work by yourself. |
| Overtime at the weekend. What will you say to him? | b. I can't work at the weekend.  
c. It is a good idea. Don't you want me to work the next weekend either?  
d. Oh, great, just what I wanted to do this weekend. |
|---|---|
| Your employee has not finished the reports as you ordered. What will you say to him? | a. Come here, stupid. What the devil have you done all that time?  
b. You can't finish the reports. Damn you.  
c. If I return in five minutes and find the report is still incomplete you will only blame you self.  
d. Amazing. Accurately what I am looking for. |
| It is 3:30 a.m. now. Your next-door neighbor turns on rock music too loud. What will you say to him? | a. Shut up the music.  
b. Hey man! Do you know what time it is now? Turn off the music!  
c. What the hell are you doing? You are a young man.  
d. It is a little too nice, exactly what I desired. |
| You go to the cinema. Older couples sit behind you, start whispering and laughing etc. As a result, you cannot listen to the movie. You are really annoyed. What will you say to them? | a. Shut your mouths. I want to listen to the movie, not to you.  
b. What an idiot you are. I can't listen to the movie.  
c. You are very annoying, you know?  
d. It is clearly obvious that you are too quiet. |
| You are the owner of a restaurant. The waiter/ress is rude in treating the customers. What will you say to him? | a. You are a worthless man. Go out of my face.  
b. You can't treat my customers in this way.  
c. Why do you treat customers in this way? If you continue to mistreat customers again, I won't take it lightly.  
d. Clearly, you do an excellent job. |
| A stranger's car hits your motorcycle from the back. What will you say to him? | a. Hey, look, you hit my motorcycle.  
b. Damn! Can't you see it? You damage my motorcycle  
c. You are indeed a little man.  
d. Oh, God, this is precisely what I wanted today. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   b. What are you doing man? You should give me your attention  
   c. You are a little person, completely right?  
   d. It is clear evident that you are doing your work well. |
| 10.| You are a teacher. One of your students gets 0 out of 100 in the course exam. What will you say to him? | a. Concentrate on your studies; your grade is too low.  
   b. Why aren't you studying for the exam?  
   c. If this pattern continues, you will fail.  
   d. It is noticeable that you have studied so hard. |
| 11.| Your brother has a new strange haircut. What will you say to him?        | a. your haircut is awful.  
   b. Why do you cut your hair in this way? You appear to be quite petty.  
   c. Brother! You look pretty silly.  
   d. Oh, God, that's just what we desired. |
| 12.| At an elegant department store, one of the passer bumps into you and causes you spilling your packages all over the floor, and he hurts your leg, too. What will you say to him? | a. Take a look around yourself!  
   b. How a blind person you are.  
   c. Hey, you, what the hell are you doing?  
   d. Oh, God, that's just what I needed. |
   b. How a dirty person you are! You ought to clean this rubbish.  
   c. Hey, man! I am talking to you. Remove this rubbish.  
   d. Oh, well that's precisely what I wished in front of my house. |
   b. Hey, what are you doing in front of the line?  
   c. Hey, you, stay in line.  
   d. It is clear that you don't know how to stay in line. |
| 15. | You are a librarian. One of the patrons in the library is talking loudly. What will you say to him? | a. Be quiet, your voice is too loud.  
b. Talking loudly is not allowed in the library.  
c. Patron, you are talking loudly.  
d. I thought I told you that speaking loudly is not permitted here. |